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Extensive observations of the pattern of seating by Negro and white college students in the cafeterias of Brooklyn College (1953) and City College of New York (1963 and 1965) revealed consistent isolation of the Negro students. This pattern of social (self) segregation existed within environments which have always been physically integrated and which are viewed by members of both races as being tolerant and generally nonprejudiced. Despite a significant increase (during the decade studied) of interracial contact, interview data indicated Negroes were still on the periphery of campus life and affiliated with noncollege friends and groups more than were white students who used the college as their major reference group. (Author)

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Physical Integration and Social Segregation of Northern Negro College Students (1953, 1963 and 1965)[1]

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Abstract

Extensive observations of the pattern of seating by Negro and white college students in the cafeterias of Brooklyn College (1953) and City College of New York (1963 and 1965) revealed consistent isolation of the Negro students. This pattern of social (self) segregation existed within environments which have always been physically integrated and which are viewed by members of both races as being tolerant and generally nonprejudiced.

Despite a significant increase (during the decade studied) of interracial contact, interview data indicated Negroes were still on the periphery of campus life and affiliated with noncollege friends and groups more than were white students who used the college as their major reference group.

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Physical Integration and Social Segregation of Northern Negro College Students (1953, 1963 and 1965)

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This study poses the question: If physical integration of Negroes and whites comes, can social integration be far behind? More specifically, empirical research was addressed to a series of interrelated problems dealing with one aspect of prejudice in the North:

First, are Negro college students who attend northern schools which have never had a discriminatory policy, socially integrated as well as physically integrated? Second, what is the relationship between verbal attitudes of white and Negro college students toward each other and their interactive behavior? Third, what changes have occurred in the patterns of interracial attitudes and behavior between 1953 and 1963--the civil rights decade? And finally, is there a difference in the extent to which the college serves as the major reference group for Negro and white students?

One dominant hypothesis of social change maintains that interracial <u>contact</u> is a sufficient condition for reducing prejudice, if the contact is equal status contact between majority and minority group members in pursuit of common goals, and the contact is sanctioned by institutional support (Allport,

Numerous research examples could be mustered to support the generalization that interracial contact promotes more tolerant attitudes. The classic study is, of course, the one by Smith (1943), in which white students increased their favorableness toward Negroes after spending only two weekends in Harlem meeting outstanding Negroes, attending teas, and so forth.

Unfortunately, most of the studies in this area are marred by methodological artifacts (especially in subject selection); in addition, they oversimplify the complexity of the motivational bases for prejudice (as described by Sarnoff, Katz, and McClintock, 1954); and finally, their optimistic conclusions are contrary to empirical evidence provided in a recent study which noted that despite frequent interracial contact while on duty in Vietnam, American Negro and white soldiers went their own way when off duty, engaging in socially segregated activities (New York Times, January 2, 1966).

On a different level of analysis, this study was concerned with the impact of a good college education on the individual student. Adoption of the college as a major reference group and acceptance of its norms should lead to basic changes in values, which in turn facilitate a break with the provincialism and narrowness imposed by the ritual and tradition of the tribe, the family, the neighborhood, and the gang.

Brooklyn College Study (1953)

To explore some of these important problems, a study was conducted at Brooklyn College in 1953. Everyone of 51 Caucasian students (hereafter called "white") interviewed felt that participation in the nonacademic sphere of college life was not limited because of race, that Negroes and whites were well integrated, and that they neither practiced discrimination themselves nor were aware of any form of prejudice existing at the college against Negroes. In addition, white Brooklyn College students consistently received extremely low F-scale scores which would classify them as relatively unprejudiced.

The majority of the Negro students at the school concurred with this impression of the college as a haven of racial tolerance and acceptance. Of the 42 Negroes interviewed, there were only 7 who voiced any contrary opinions, some noting that their participation was not complete and others pointing to a certain air of coldness, a certain vague amount of prejudice.

However, when we looked at concrete interracial behavior, a quite different picture emerged. The 20 fraternities in the college and the 12 sororities never had a Negro member, nor in fact did the vast majority of the numerous house plan associations. Negroes belonged predominantly to Negro groups. No Negro was ever on the staff of the newspaper, literary magazine, or in a number of other similar organizations. Indicative of their lack of participation in social groups in the college is the fact that the Negro students in our sample be-

longed to an average of three groups while they were in high school, but in college belonged to an average of only .8 groups. White students also belonged to fewer groups in college than in high school, but not significantly so.

When questioned about reasons for their general lack of participation in extracurricular affairs, Negro students complained of lack of time due to commuting, pressures from studies, and after-school work. The last argument seems a potent one, since 40 percent of the Negro students we interviewed worked an average of 19 hours a week. Fewer white students worked (25 percent), and they worked shorter hours (4 less).

Seating Preferences

It became clear, then, that what we needed to study intergroup behavior was some situation which could be observed first-hand, one in which the majority of the students voluntarily engaged, and which did not put any demands of additional time on either the Negro or the white student. Seating choice in the school cafeteria was selected as a behavior that would satisfy these criteria. The procedure was quite simple. Over a three-week period on 30 different occasions the seating position of all Negro students sitting in the school's only cafeteria was recorded.

During that time there were nearly 300 instances of Negroes sitting in the cafeteria. Evidence that integration did exist at this college can be shown from the fact that some Negroes occupied almost every section of the cafeteria, that is,

there was no section that was closed to a Negro who chose to sit there. On the other hand, that there was quite extreme segregation is also clear from our data. The data indicate that 75 percent of all the Negroes who sat in the school cafeteria sat in one small area, comprising less than one-tenth of all the available tables. Therefore, the hypothesis that seating is not based upon nor predictable from race, can be rejected with a high degree of statistical confidence.

Not only do most Negroes sit in one section, but the majority of time, 64 percent of the time, they are observed sitting either alone or in the exclusive company of other Negroes. Looked at another way, only about one-third of the time was there opportunity for real social integration, when whites and Negroes voluntarily shared tables to eat or to talk.

City College Study (1963)

Are these results and their implications relics of an age gone by, or do they have some enduring quality which has not been affected by the decade of civil rights agitation and gains?

My plans to return to Brooklyn College in 1963 to conduct a follow-up study had to be changed when I discovered that the rather small percentage of Negroes to whites, about 3 percent, had decreased[2] over this ten-year period. In order to

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2. According to reliable student and faculty sources at Brooklyn College

get a larger population to observe, I turned to C.C.N.Y., where the Negro-white ratio is between 5 and 10 percent in the day session and about 20 percent in the night session.[3] In addition, both colleges are similar enough academically and administratively to permit this substitution without introducing much bias in "before-after" comparisons.

Seating Preferences

We began with a very thorough observational study, recording:

a) the number of Negro and white students sitting at each of the 56 available tables in the school's snack bar,

b) on 40 different occasions over five months at each class period during the day, and

c) for 10 occasions during the night session.

During this period of time over 6,000 students used this eating facility at an average of over 150 per hour. Of this total, about 8 percent were Negro, a figure close to that estimated for the school as a whole by the Board of Education.

In the night session this figure was much higher; 25 percent of all the students eating in the snack bar were Negro.

The first figure presents a seating plan of the student snack bar at City College as it looked in 1963. First, it

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3. Estimate by Gustave Rosenberg, Chairman, Board of Higher Education, in the New York Times, January 4, 1964.

is clear that there is evidence here for integration. Negroes do exercise their right to sit, eat, and socialize wherever they choose to. Not only do some Negroes at some time sit at all sections of the room, but on 51 percent of the occasions when Negroes sat in the snack bar they shared tables with white students. Since these tables are quite small, usually accommodating not more than four, the likelihood of direct interaction is highly probable. This figure of 51 percent "integration" represents a statistically significant increase over the 36 percent integration or sharing of tables noted at Brooklyn College ten years earlier.

Negroes can sit anywhere, and some exercise this right, most do not. There exists a highly predictable pattern of seating by Negroes at a few tables and fairly regular avoidance of other tables. For example, there are 10 tables at which no Negro ever sat, 44 tables with 1 percent or fewer Negro occupants, and only 4 tables in the entire cafeteria where more than 5 percent of the total occupants are Negro.

What I would now like to call your attention to is the area I have designated as "Section G," tables 53 to 56. These, then, are the Negro tables. More precise information of the degree to which this area is one of predominately Negro occupancy is given in Table 1. If we look at the data for percent of Negroes sitting in each section, compared to the total number of persons in each section for the day session, we can see that 60 percent of all people who sat in Section G were Negro. In

Table 1

Percentage of Negroes Sitting in Each Section

of the C.C.N.Y. Snack Bar - Day and Night Sessions (1963)

Section	% Total Tables	To Persons in Section Day	Night	To Total Negroes Day (462)	Night (264)
A	9	1	26	1	10
B	27	3	16	10	20
C	23	2	21	5	21
D	7	8	30	7	7
E	20	5	19	12	14
F	7	13	31	10	7
G	7	60	62	54	24
Totals:	56 tables	462/6036 = 8%	264/1081 = 25%	100%	100%

addition, more than half of all the Negroes who ever ate in the snack bar sat at only 4 tables, and when they did, they occupied them exclusively 70 percent of the time.

Night Session Observations

Now, we were told that the same pattern would not occur in the night session, where students are more mature, have a limited amount of time available, don't come to socialize, but usually to cram before class or to get a quick meal. Therefore, it was expected that seating would be based only on the convenience of available tables and not predictable on the basis of a variable such as race. In part, these suggestions appear to have some validity; in part, however, they fall short of the truth. Once again the large majority of people sitting in Section G are Negro. In fact, in the evening 62 percent of all the persons sitting in Section G were Negro. However, in the last column of this table we can see that the majority of Negro students who sit in the cafeteria do not sit in Section G. Rather, there is a more even distribution of the total number of Negroes throughout the snack bar.

What is striking is the contrast between the relatively proportional percent of the total Negroes who sit in Section G and their disproportional representation compared to all the students who sit there. Clearly, this must indicate that relatively few whites sit there and may in fact be avoiding this section. That this may be so is demonstrated by the 93 percent of the occasions when Negroes sat at these four tables and no

white student sat with them. We will point to this phenomenon again shortly when reviewing more recent observational data.

If social contact in the setting I have described reflects in some way a process which takes place in the school at large, then access to the diversity of ideas, values, and people offered by the college is limited for Negroes, in this case limited in part by self-segregation. But can we generalize from patterns of seating in the snack bar to other types of social interaction? I think so. At City College every fraternity has a clause in its constitution forbidding discrimination because of race, color, or religion. There are no Negroes in any of the college's 20 fraternities nor in any of the college's sororities. There are four fraternities and four sororities which are exclusively Negro and which, in fact, refuse to belong to the College Interfraternity Council.

One Negro student was quoted in the school paper as saying that Negroes do segregate themselves, since "it's just natural to want to associate with your friends." Can we conclude, then, that the reference group for the Negro college student is other Negro college students? Were these students friends before they came to college and thus are only continuing a previously formed association? How aware are the students of the Negro section in the cafeteria? How do both groups of students perceive the social environment at the college?

To answer these and other questions, three trained interviewers from the National Opinion Research Corporation

interviewed 100 students who were seated in all sections of the snack bar; two-thirds of them were white, one-third of the respondents were Negro. Precautions were exercised in the selection of respondents, the wording of questions, and recording of data. Let me summarize the major findings:

1. Our small Negro sample came from 23 different public and private schools throughout the city, and their friendship with Negroes at the college was not a carry-over from high school.

2. Negroes belonged to very few formal college groups (fewer than whites), and once again an obvious reason is the extent of their after-school work. Eighty percent of the Negroes worked, an average of 17 hours each, while only 35 percent of the white students worked, an average of 7 hours each.

3. We also obtained some provocative results which bear upon the question we raised earlier about reference group identification. Negro students whom we interviewed had many more noncollege friends than college friends, regardless of the race of their college friends, while white students had more friends within college than outside of college. In both the day and night session Negroes report having three times as many non-college friends from their neighborhood as they have friends in college. The same pattern holds for formal group membership. Day session whites belong to twice às many college-based groups as they do to noncollege groups, while Negroes belong to more groups centered outside of college than centered inside of

college (specifically 20 percent more).

4. Of the Negroes we interviewed who were sitting throughout the snack bar, 90 percent identified Section G as the Negro section, some noting it was called the "Kitty Corner." Three-quarters of the white males and half of the white females also pointed out Section G as the Negro section. No other section was so clearly identified with any single group as was "G" with Negroes.

5. We should note that more Negroes reported that their seating preferences were consistent, i.e., they regularly sat at or near the same table than did whites (75 percent vs. 49 percent).

6. Finally, with only a few exceptions both Negro and white students were enthusiastic about the lack of prejudice and discrimination at the college.

Thus, the evidence presented warrants at least three major conclusions. First, there is a clear discrepancy between an extremely positive tolerant interracial attitude and the clear evidence for behavior which reflects some degree of prejudice and segregation. Second, if we can consider the two colleges, Brooklyn and City College as comparable and can view this in the sense of a longitudinal study, then we can point to an increase in the extent to which Negro and white students are becoming socially integrated and sharing the same facilities. We might also conclude that physical contact under the conditions dictated by Allport's hypothesis is not sufficient to guarantee social

integration and true acceptance. However, and most important, is the conclusion that a significant proportion of Negro college students in our sample still maintain their precollege reference group identification. Perhaps this is in part a defense to minimize the threat of an unfavorable discrepancy when comparing their opinions, abilities, and background to white students, and in part a way of maximizing the probability of appearing superior by comparison to noncollege Negro friends.

City College Study (1965)

To test for the significance of the tables in Section G to the students who sat there, I was about to perform an experiment by removing them or having my students occupy them during every period, when a natural field experiment occurred. The snack bar was closed for several months in mid-year to permit expansion and refurbishing. When it reopened we were there in force, making 31 observations during one week at every class hour.

Table 2 shows the percentage of Negroes sitting in each section of the snack bar after this renovation, and we notice a dramatic difference from our previous results. It now looks as if, in comparing the percentage of Negroes to the total people in any given section, Section G does not show a particularly high proportion of Negroes. Moreover, if we compare the number of Negroes sitting there to the total number of Negroes, we can see that the greatest percentage of Negroes no longer is in this section.

These data initially appeared to indicate to us that

Table 2

Percentage of Negroes Sitting in Each Section of the C.C.N.Y. Snack Bar after Renovation (1965)

Section	% Total Tables	To Persons in Section	To Total Negroes (188)
A	4	5	4
B	30	3	18
C	26	2	14
D	7	5	7
E	20	9	35
F	6	5	7
G	6	10	14
Totals:	69 tables	188/4165 = 4.5%	100%

our earlier results had not really located a section with any enduring significance. However, if you now notice the total percentage of Negroes to whitesin the snack bar, you will see that during this period of time only 4.5 percent of the total occupants were Negro, whereas before approximately 8 percent were Negro. Since there is a cafeteria a floor below the snack bar, we then made similar observations in that area, because we expected that the loss in one eating area would be made up in the other one. To the contrary, we found that the mean ratio of Negroes to whites in the cafeteria was only 6 percent.

Clearly, then, the Negroes who sat in the snack bar before the renovation and had to find some other place to sit while it was closed, had not returned to the snack bar, nor were they eating in this cafeteria. The hypothesis that I entertain is that the majority of students who did not return to the snack bar were those who typically sat in Section G. These students as a group found some other place to eat, and when the snack bar reopened chose not to return, are probably still self-segregated in some other area of the school's eating facilities, or may be eating off campus.

Does this mean that the configuration of tables we had localized has lost its racial significance? Maybe not. The final figure (2) shows the percentage of occasions that Negroes sat in a given section alone or exclusively with other Negroes. Across all sections the mean segregated seating is 40 percent or conversely, 60 percent of the time whites and Negroes shared

the same facilities.

However, once again old Section G forces itself upon our attention. Ninety-one percent of the time when Negroes sat there whites did not. Here we have the same phenomenon noted earlier in the 1963 night session observations. These tables are not defined any longer by a disproportionately large group of Negroes sitting there, but rather by the avoidance of white students who do not sit there when Negroes are present.

How generalizable are these results? Bibb Latané of Columbia University, informed me that he and Stan Schachter observed the same pattern of consistent Negro-white seating coincidentally to a study they were conducting--not in a college, but rather in a local prison.

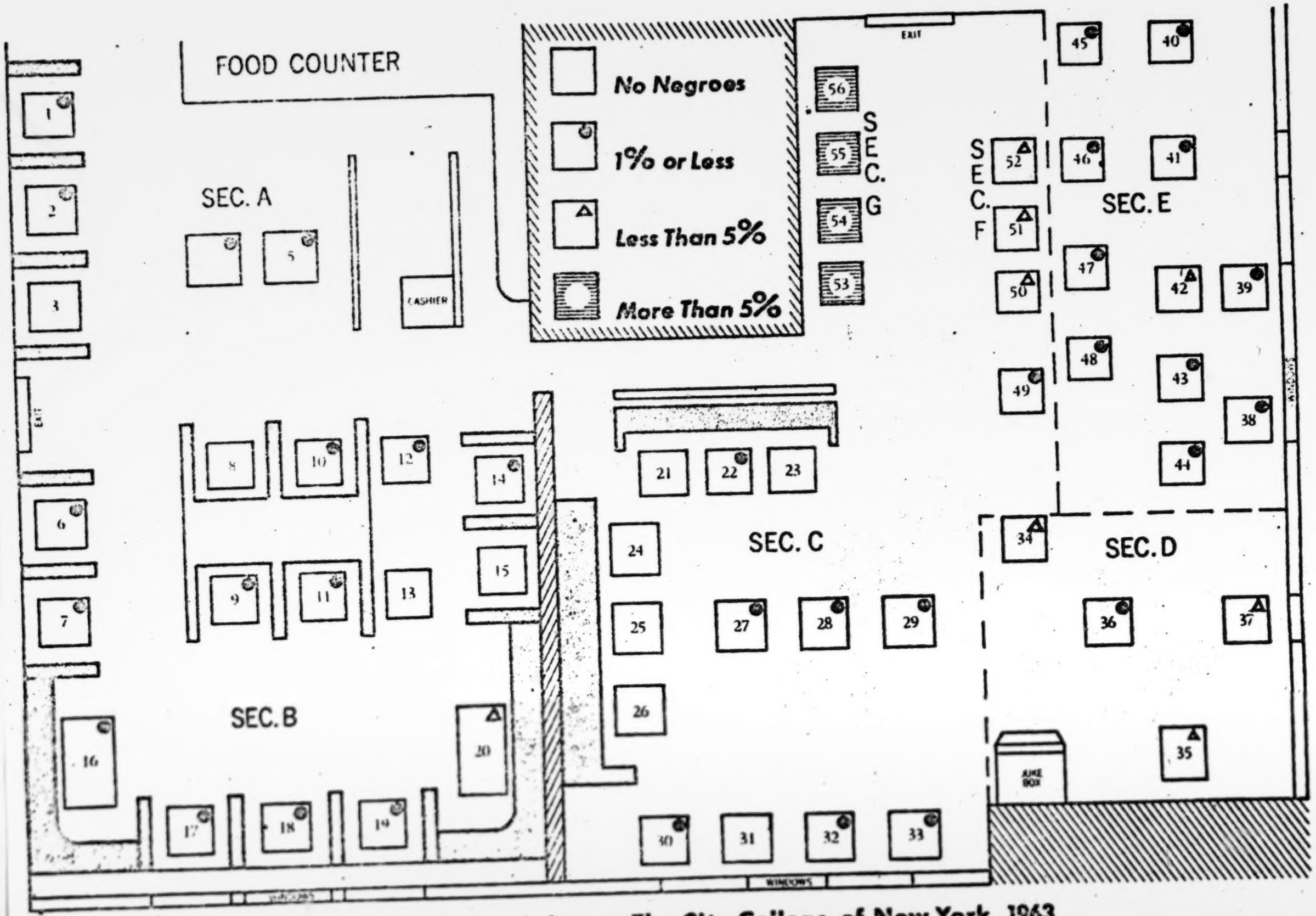

Figure 1- Seating plan of the student snack bar at The City College of New York, 1963

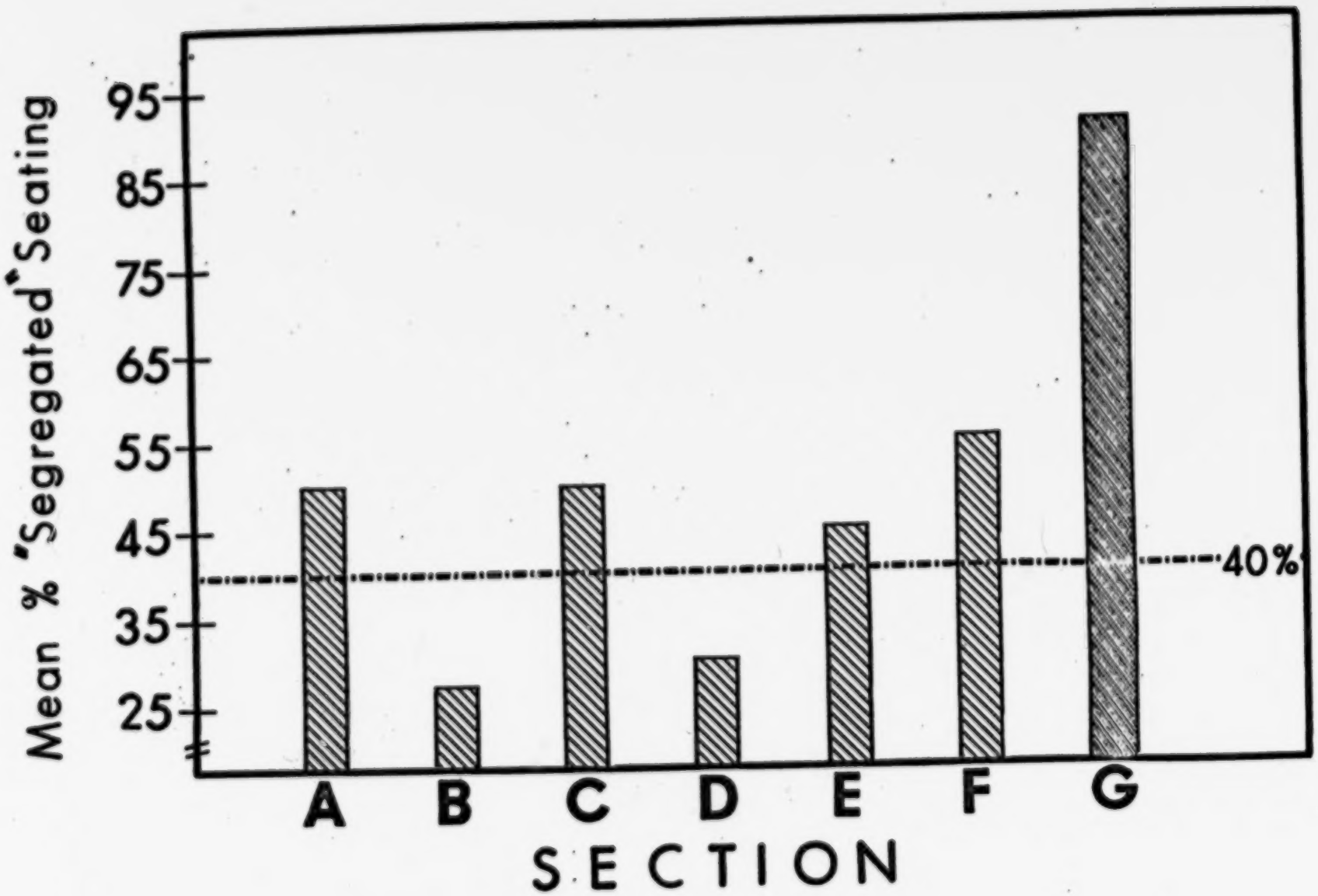

Figure 2 - MEAN PERCENTAGE OF OCCASIONS WHEN NEGROES SAT IN THE SNACK BAR THAT THEY WERE ALONE OR WITH OTHER NEGROES (C.C.N.Y., 1965)